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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, NEA/PI, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA,  
B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMAN  
LONDON FOR TSOU  
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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION - WOMEN, HOPES FOR REFORM

Block Quotes

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Saturday, June 10, 2006

-- Haytham Hamad Al-Shaie penned in the progressive Arabic-language daily Al-Qabas under the title "Women and Youth.... 2006 Nation" (6/10): "Women should not succumb to pressures from their families, tribes, sects, or even the different political trends. Their votes are a responsibility and they have the right to choose just as the men do. We ask women to practice their right without interference from anyone. As for the youth, they are the future and these elections are the last chance for many of the candidates. Matters will change in the future and we will see vast movement amongst the youth."

-- Thabet Ibrahim Al-Haroon criticized in the moderate Arabic-language daily Al-Rai Al-Aam under the title "Platforms and Plans" (6/10): "How I wish the candidates would raise a slogan pointing to a platform and plans for development that would move Kuwait away from the status quo and into the realm of the aspirations of the citizenry. But, what goes on now is a reaction to the current issues. Some consider this to be a gateway to reform. It consists of attacking from one side and making excuses form the other. There are those who have printed and distributed material with some value but most offer either a speech followed by a heavy dinner and a deep sleep, or gratitude and salutation and sheep. How can a voter ask a candidate his position on issues if the latter has not put forth a platform? What of the housing issue? What of the privatization issue? What of the health and education issues? What of the development and legislative issues? What is the destiny of thousands of unemployed graduates?"

-- Political Science professor at Kuwait University Dr. Shamlan Yousef Al-Issa remarked in the pro-government Arabic-language daily Al-Seyassah under the title "The Sad Elections" (6/10): "I hid from no one the depression that has come upon me these days because of the parliamentary elections. This feeling comes from being a citizen unable to change matters for the better.... Many Kuwaitis, and I am one of them, are overcome by a feeling of depression and worry about the results of this year's elections. It is expected that many candidates who are good at political manipulation and lying, and they are many in these elections, will make their way to parliament.... I hope that I am mistaken as the Kuwaiti people have the last word on [June] 29."

-- Nabil Al-Fadl said in the moderate Arabic-language daily Al-Watan under the title "Good News for Kuwait's Women" (6/10): "Good news for Kuwaiti women: Islamist candidates are counting on your

gullibility such as the one who said 'if he stood against our rights for eternity we will still elect him'. They see themselves harvesting the votes of the women who will not ask who stood with them and who stood against them. They think that the number of Islamists in parliament will increase as a result of women's votes. If that happens then we will be indebted to Kuwaiti women for canceling our brains and losing faith in theirs. The news to Kuwaiti women is that those political Islamists who claim their numbers will increase in the next parliament because of women have already stated that their priority is to Islamize the laws and amend Article Two. If that happens, their first victim will be the women.... For those amongst you who feel her brain is that of a fish, vote for the Islamists. For those who fear for her femininity and her self-respect, you should ruin their plans with your vote. Your vote is not a vice."

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